



GOOD DRIVING PRACTICE TIPS

In this newsletter we are talking about 15 good driving practice tips which not only improve your driving but could dramatically improve your fuel consumption as well.

Most of the information below is taken from a review of work by the United Nations Environment Programme, the German Road Safety Council, UK fuel guru Dr Michael Coyle, the UK Driving Standards Agency and the UK Sustainable Development Commission. I have added some further information and useful tips.

- 1) Read the vehicle handbook to ensure that you know how it works, and that it is maintained in line with manufacturer recommendations. Many drivers know very little about the fuel or safety equipment fitted to their vehicle.
- 2) Remove unnecessary load weight from the vehicle and roof racks or other devices that obstruct airflow.
- 3) Circle-check the vehicle before each journey (sometimes known as the circle of safety). Look for fluids on the floor, poorly-inflated tyres or anything out of the ordinary. FLOWER is a food circle check acronym – fuel, lights, oil, water, electrics and rubber.
- 4) Avoid reversing with a cold engine. Reverse into parking spaces when the engine is warm. It is also safer to reverse in and drive out. Warm the engine by pulling away smoothly and driving gently.
- 5) Plan and look ahead to anticipate road and traffic conditions, when you need to slow down or stop well in advance. Early recognition of potential hazards optimises speed, minimises harsh braking or acceleration and avoids unnecessary stopping. A smoother drive, acting in good time rather than reacting at the last moment reduces stress, helps traffic flow and improves fuel consumption.
- 6) 'Drive calmly'. If you are angry or upset you are more likely to drive aggressively which will reduce fuel consumption, increase vehicle wear and tear and very much increase the likelihood of collisions.
- 7) Choose the right speed – always observe the speed limit to stay legal, save fuel, be safe, and get there just as quickly.
- 8) Use engine braking. When you take your foot off the accelerator no fuel is being used and the engine acts as a compression brake. Leave plenty of space in front and observe what the traffic is doing to use engine braking effectively.
- 9) Use the vehicle's momentum. When you go over the crest of a hill if it is safe to do so, take your foot off the accelerator pedal and let the vehicle's own momentum propel the vehicle forward. Never take the vehicle out of gear and let it roll (coasting) as this is illegal and wastes fuel.



- 10) Use 'block gear changing' in manual vehicles. It is rarely necessary to use every gear in the gearbox in sequence. If you understand your vehicle, the road and traffic conditions this 'skip changing' can help save fuel and your gearbox.
- 11) Gear high and rev low. Without making the engine struggle, and as soon as conditions allow, use the highest possible gear for the road speed especially if your vehicle has a diesel engine.
- 12) Air conditioning should not be used unless absolutely necessary. Use it to demist windows and when needed but then turn it off to save fuel.
- 13) Try to keep the vehicle moving – avoid stopping and starting by looking and planning ahead. If it's fitted, use cruise control at higher speeds as this can reduce fatigue and improve mpg on longer journeys.
- 14) Engine idling wastes fuel, and causes long term damage to the engine. If you are likely to not move for more than 30 seconds, switch the engine off. If your vehicle is fitted with a 'stop start' system then use it.
- 15) Monitor your fuel consumption continuously and measure improvements. Try different styles of driving to see which one works best for you.

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